

# Design

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*Morton Sundour Fabrics Ltd p. 12*

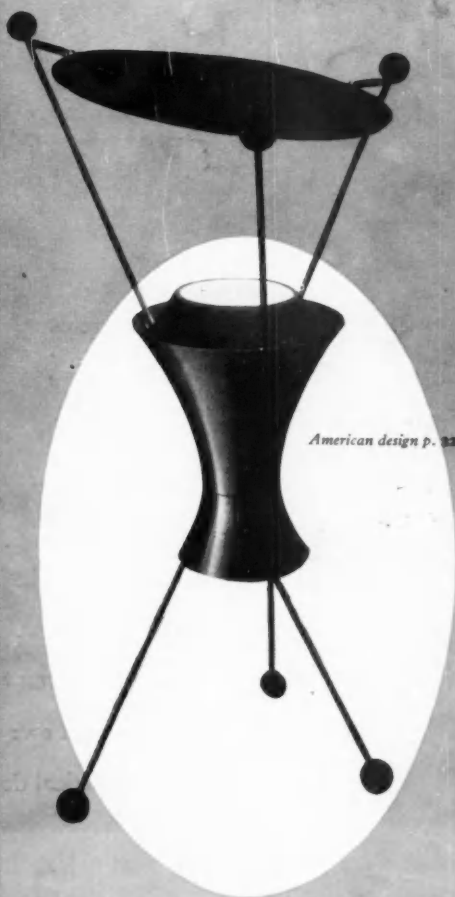
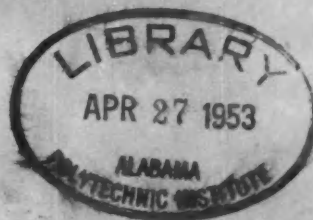
*Review of Current Design p. 20*

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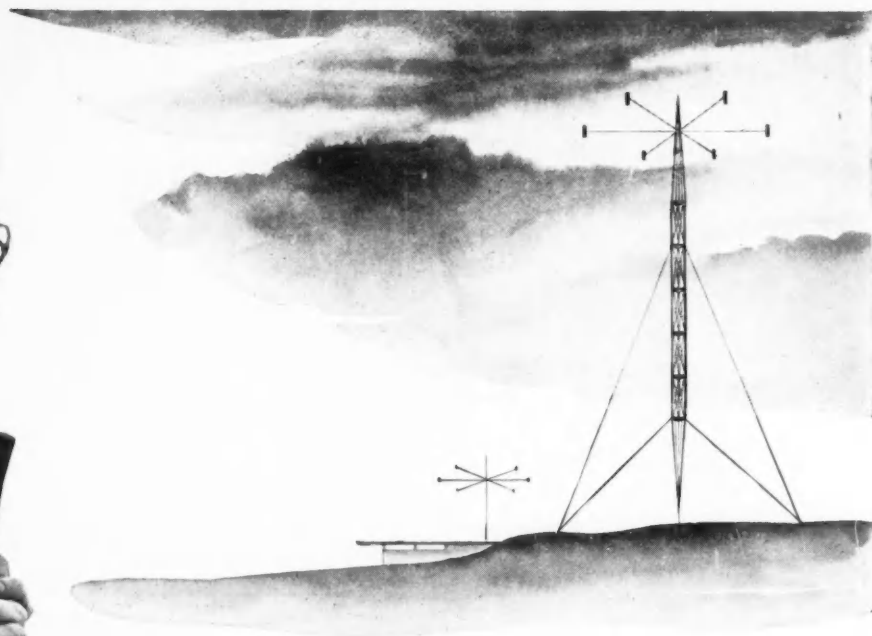
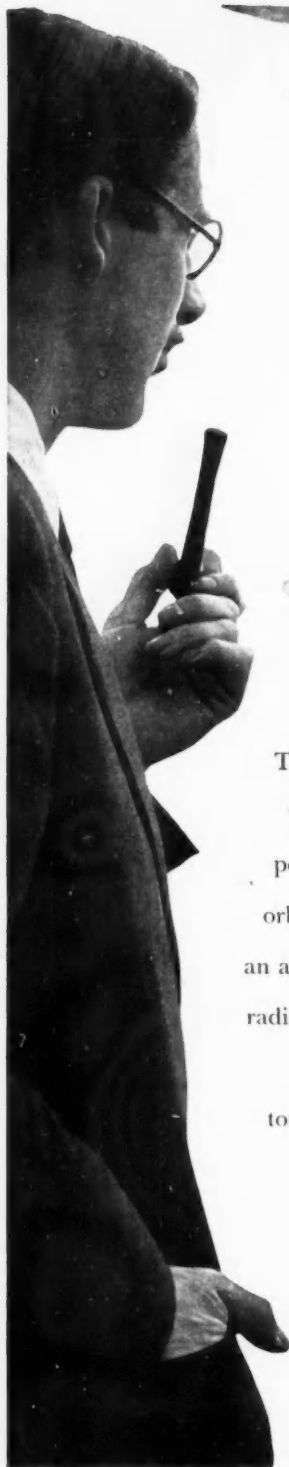


The Council of Industrial Design April 1953 No 52 Price 2s

arch



*American design p. 23*



### *How much horse power in a raincloud?*

There is more energy in a raincloud than in an atomic bomb—and one day we may know how to tap it: there is inexhaustible power in the tides, and people have envisaged a time when we may use so much of it as to alter the orbit of the moon. . . . Perhaps the windmill will stage a comeback, lifted on an aluminium tower to a height of a thousand feet or more. And what of solar radiation? . . . Or will cheap power from atomic fuels outdistance all the rest?

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W.C.2  
p. 373

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NUMBER 52  
APRIL 1953

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EDITOR: Michael Farr

EDITORIAL ADVISERS: Gordon Russell,  
Alistair Maynard, Paul Reilly,  
Mark Hartland Thomas

ART EDITOR: Peter Hatch

ASSISTANT EDITOR: John E. Blake

EDITORIAL OFFICES: Tilbury House,  
Petty France, London SW1  
Abbey 7080

ADVERTISEMENT OFFICES: Newman  
Books Ltd, 68 Welbeck Street,  
London W1. Welbeck 3335

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## DESIGN next month

DESIGN POLICY in  
W. & T. Avery Ltd

REPROVOX Tape Recorder  
Development of a spot welder

IDEAL HOME exhibition

# Design

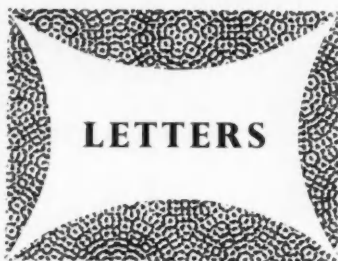
## Testing public taste

IT IS HARD TO BELIEVE THAT, apart from some notable and regular exceptions, the furniture shown at the British Furniture Manufacturers' Exhibition at Earls Court is the best or even typical of a great industry. The DAILY MAIL Ideal Home Exhibition at Olympia, which is a retailers' exhibition, has in recent years shown a much higher standard and so do an increasing number of stores throughout the country.

It would seem almost that the nearer one gets to the public the more discriminating the taste and yet, in spite of rumours of slump and recession, one must assume that the manufacturers of the conventional 'bread and butter' know their business and their buyers, and that the buyers know their public. But what does the public know? The police sergeant who cast his vote at the DIA Charing Cross Exhibition\* even before the two rooms were finished, voted for what he already had at home. He dismissed the other room as foreign and new-fangled, and many will have done likewise. But many, too, will probably have seen the new ideas in furnishing for the first time; the wise ones will have looked long, before voting, for there was in one room, as Tullulah Bankhead once said in another context, less than met the eye, in the other more.

We write before the results are known, but, even allowing for the limitation of a purely metropolitan audience, what will the vote prove? If there is a heavy poll for the contemporary room it will be easy to say that the trade lags behind public taste, for the proportion of national window space given to new ideas is infinitesimal. If the under 35s vote one way and the over 35s the other something could be said to be in the wind, for age grouping is the ABC of market research. But tempting as it will be to pluck straws from the votes, the real decision will remain at point of sale. We recall the candid, if cynical, potter who once said "Put your trust in the lady with the shopping basket but use her properly", by which he meant let her exercise, not merely state, her choice; ask her to vote if you like but then leave the room and let her take home the pattern she really wants; her two choices may not be the same.

\* Reviewed on pages 8-11.



## Readers' comments on 'Quartics'

SIR: I should like to refer to the article by J. A. D. Wedd on 'Quartics' (DESIGN January pages 15-17).

Furniture and, of course, still more so, furnishing fabrics, form only a small part of a general architectural design. These so-called quartic shapes are evident in contemporary sculpture and architecture, which would prove that they are the expression of a contemporary feeling and so form a common factor for a contemporary style. This is, after all, what we designers endeavour to achieve.

I think that these quartic shapes are the logical development from the more rigid cubist forms, so popular between the wars, and certainly they will date in some years' time, just as any other style has done before. With regard to fabric design this is not a bad thing, as new collections are produced every year, and by continuous development and change design is kept alive and expressive of current trends.

MARIAN MAHLER  
194 Goldhurst Terrace  
NW6

SIR: In the introduction to J. A. D. Wedd's interesting article, on 'Quartics' you refer to the use of free forms in design as a contemporary cliché.

May I suggest that there are really two quite separate issues here, as the illustrations include examples from both graphic and three-dimensional design. In graphic design the 'free form' has a long ancestry, as Mr Wedd shows in his reference to the magatama and the paisley pattern, and belongs no more to a particular generation than flower motifs, stars, stripes, or any of the other pattern-making devices. It is surely the style or treatment that changes according to current fashion and it depends on the quality of the designer, more than on the subject matter, as to whether his work appears hackneyed.

In the design of three-dimensional objects for use, however, shapes should bear a natural relation to structure and function. An artist's palette, for example, is one of those timeless objects which, like many other hand tools, is thoroughly satisfying visually. When a similar shape is used for a table top it is often merely a decorative

motif, a piece of ornament applied with a conscious striving after fashionable effect.

With the growing public interest in modern furniture design 'reproduction contemporary', with a liberal sprinkling of smart features, is already appearing in the shops. 'Aerodynamic' is superseding 'olde worlde' as a source of inspiration, and we must expect to see tables looking like aeroplane wings even if this is as ridiculous as making aeroplane wings look like tables.

ERNEST RACE  
2 Scarth Road  
Barnes Common  
London SW13

SIR: It is an excellent idea to tell the 'Tale of some current clichés', but please do not leave out so many facts. You have published an article about quartic curves and the origin of their use as a motif in contemporary design; but you do not tell us the definition of a quartic curve, nor do you explain distinctly how it is generated, nor how it is to be distinguished from curves which are not quartics. If these things can only be stated mathematically, then let us have the mathematics: or if you won't, then let us have an article on something that needs no mathematics to explain it.

Mr Wedd's article leaves the most pertinent question unasked: why is it that this particular kind of shape appeals so much to designers at this particular time? There is room for some fruitful speculation about that.

DAVID W. PYE  
Royal College of Art  
Prince Consort Road  
London SW7

## Design appreciation in schools

SIR: The article by Sydney Foott (DESIGN January pages 24-7) quite rightly emphasised the importance of the child's environment at school. It is a pity that more local education authorities do not follow the example of the LCC in making use of the experts already in their employ to advise them upon school buildings and furnishings. Far too often we see schools which may be aesthetically satisfactory on the architect's drawing board, but which any teacher of experience would criticise on functional grounds. Anyone who has taught in a classroom overlooking the school playing fields will appreciate that theory and practice are two different things in school architecture.

Manufacturers complain, in the pages of your magazine and elsewhere, that their better designs are frequently the least popular, and whilst the standard of public taste is low they cannot be blamed entirely for producing badly designed and ill constructed goods. The provision of suitable equipment and buildings and the use of exhibitions are, however, only two of the many ways in which teachers are trying to educate the taste of the future general public. The first point to appreciate is that

every child is a potential purchaser, but few are potential artists; and therefore that direct practice in distinguishing between good and bad in design must play an important part in any art course. In Technical Schools, such as this, some of the children will have an even more direct influence upon industrial design in the future. Here we can do something to bridge the gap which has grown between designer and craftsman, by a closer link between art and handicraft in schools.

DESIGN could do much to help teachers of these subjects by giving more publicity to the work being done in schools along these lines, which would also help to establish closer relations between education and industry.

SYLVIA ROCHFORD  
K. JOHN POLLARD  
Manor Park School  
Nuneaton

SIR: Sydney Foott's article shows only too well how very fortunate London school children are in living in or near our capital city. We who undertake this task in less fortunate areas are faced with the difficult problem of procuring, at first hand, examples of well designed articles.

First and foremost we have to rely upon the experience of the child as it tries different craft work in school. The realisation of the limitations of the material used then becomes a valuable factor in the child's understanding of what we mean by good design. For example, a child soon discovers that one of the most difficult things to do in pottery is to make a plain bowl. Any flaws in a badly made pot can be so easily disguised by even uglier additions. But a great deal more could be done if our local authorities would organise similar exhibitions to those of the LCC. All children need such stimulus, and with careful thought and planning it should not be a costly proposition.

JEAN SPARKS  
The Art and Craft Department  
The Laison Girls' School  
Melton Mowbray

SIR: How I agree with the point in Sydney Foott's article that design should be made familiar to the public through the things they use every day. With children, of course, it is especially important.

I cannot help thinking that those people who take ordinary everyday things - well designed contemporary ones - and display them for sale surrounded by 'arty crafty' clichés such as fishnets, wooden spoons, earthy soup bowls, straw table mats and the like, are doing a great deal of harm. It is like apologising for contemporary design and suggests that it is insufficient by itself. I know a shop that does this in a North London district where such display methods are bound to remove otherwise practical things from the realm of the everyday existence of the locals.

BERNARD GAY  
1A Montague Mews South  
George Street W1

Further letters on page 36.

# POINTS and POINTERS

**'GOOD DESIGN.'** These labels are available at cost to manufacturers and distributors for items which are selected for the 'Good Design' exhibitions held at the Merchandise Mart, Chicago, and the Museum of Modern Art, New York. 'Good Design' is the largest permanent exhibition of home furnishings in the world and some exhibits recently shown there are illustrated in an article on design in the U S A beginning on page 22.

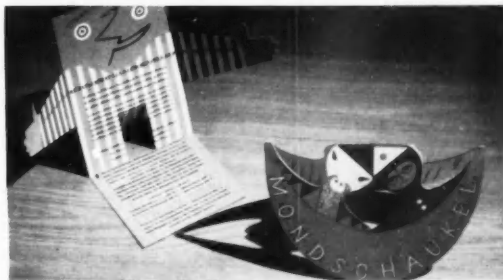


**BRITISH RAYON.** Hamilton House, the new London Headquarters of the British Rayon and Synthetic Fibres Federation, will be the centre of an extensive publicity campaign during Coronation Year for the promotion of rayon and synthetic fibres in the fashion trade and in various branches of industry. The recent opening of the house was marked by the showing of 40 model gowns in rayon from the spring collections and later in March an exhibition showing methods of dyeing and finishing rayon fabrics was held. The interior was redesigned by Professor R. D. Russell in a blend of traditional and contemporary styles and the photograph (below) shows the main committee room. The table was designed by Professor Russell and the chairs by W. H. Russell. All the furnishing fabrics, including carpets, curtains and covers, are made of rayon or rayon mixed with other fibres.



**FURNISHINGS.** An opportunity to introduce new British furnishing design to the American public is provided in a scheme, recently announced by the Board of Trade, for furnishing a large addition to a hotel in Kansas City, Missouri. This new addition will increase the hotel's accommodation by an extra 200 rooms and these will be furnished entirely by contemporary furniture of the best quality. The design of the interiors is under the direction of Henry End, an Englishman who is particularly interested in quality goods from the United Kingdom. British firms are therefore invited to communicate immediately by air mail with Mr End, The Davidson Furniture Co, 1216 Grand Avenue, Kansas City, Missouri.

**STUDENTS' CARNIVALS.** The Carnival season before Lent has long been an excuse in some parts of Germany for all manner of exhibitionism from public parades of carnival floats through the main city thoroughfares to private junketings behind closed doors. Some of the gayest occasions centre on the local art schools, and weeks before Carnival all regular work



comes to a stop while the students prepare for their balls and dances. In Hamburg the Landeskunstschule seemed to be decorated entirely in aluminium foil, silver, red and gold, a restriction apparently imposed on the students by the fire department. Their welcoming open-armed invitation card showed a lighter touch – the kind of invention one has come to associate with the home-made Christmas cards sent out by some of our own designers. The boat-shaped invitation card is from the Werkkunstschule in Wuppertal, one of the liveliest art schools in Western Germany.

**CORONATION DECORATIONS.** Perhaps most interesting of the Coronation street decorations, recently described by Mr Eccles, Minister of Works, are the four enormous tubular steel arches which will span the processional way along the Mall. Designed by the Ministry's chief architect, Eric Bedford, they are majestic in their proportions but gaily decorated with gold cane lattice work and a princess's coronet suspended on gold wires. Each of the arches is surmounted by two huge lion and unicorn symbols in steel and wire mesh which will look down upon the crowds and the trees from a height of over 70 ft. Here and in the covered stands decked out with flowers and banners may be seen the first direct descendants from the Festival of Britain.



## SAME ROOM : SAME COST

Two modern styles. Which do you prefer?

Paul Reilly

THE PROS AND CONS OF COMPARATIVE EXHIBITIONS have long been argued by our design reformers. The dangers are indeed manifest, ranging from offence taken by the trades concerned, through misunderstanding and confusion in the public mind, to the finer points of fair play and balanced contrast. And always at the end there is the boggy of defeating one's own purpose by encouraging support for the thing to be pilloried and, in the case of a ballot, of courting a smashing victory for the opposition that would immediately be exploited by the backwoodsmen.

The Design and Industries Association must have weighed all these factors before planning their 'Register Your Choice' exhibition (is 'register' pollster jargon for 'make'?) at London Transport's Charing Cross Station. There must have been some doubts about the timing, for contemporary furnishing is not long out of its austere, protestant stage; it is still

unfamiliar to the great majority and it is still in many quarters suspect as being chill and intellectual.

There must also have been some anxiety about the pricing, for, in general, contemporary furniture produced in limited quantities cannot yet compete with conventional designs produced by the big factories. We suspect also that there must have been some arguments beforehand about one designer being capable of an equally sincere job in both rooms.

And yet in the result the DIA and its designer, Mrs Phoebe de Syllas, managed to produce two rooms of identical size and purpose at approximately the same price each of which was true to its type. If, as one on-looker remarked, the contemporary room appeared to have been consciously designed and the 'commercial' room merely assembled, that too is true to life, for the young people who frequent the contemporary shops on the whole choose their furnishings more





**LEFT:** Typical suburban room, solidly comfortable, overcrowded, restless in detail, sombre in tone; dark colours to conceal dirt, high glosses for glamour, electric candle lights and shades for nostalgia; wallpaper of embossed leafy porridge with frieze marking absent picture rail; leafy carpet in autumn tints; fat three-seat settee inviting feet up; voluptuous glazed bookcase set across corner; stepped two-toned tiled fire surround for bric-à-brac; tasselled standard and table lamp shades and – pièce de résistance – two-toned polished cocktail-cabinet-sideboard in centre of long wall with

two-toned stepped mirror above. A familiar scene, not overdrawn, deriving little enough from the past but somehow often called 'traditional' in the furnishing world.

**ABOVE:** Same room, different dress, offering more space for movement yet upholstered seat for one more guest; fresh colours, reds and oatmeal and blues for upholstery, olive-green wallpaper with small pink and lime pattern on chimney wall; adjustable swivel light on long white wall; modest sideboard at right angles

to wall dividing eating from sitting area, a division also marked by change of floor covering from dark Kelim rug to off-white pile carpet; simple black tiled fire surround with polished wood frame and shelf; open bookcase set flat to wall; pictures hung low and grouped together; all furniture on legs to increase illusion of space and light in weight for easy moving and cleaning. A contemporary setting, perhaps more uncompromising than its companion, but typical in its use of natural wood finishes, its open planning, contrasting colours and currently fashionable foibles such as pleated shades and climbing plants.

carefully than those who buy *en suite*.

A point about the exhibition that most of the daily press reporters missed was that this was not a contrast between old and new fashions or between antique and modern furniture or even between reproduction and contemporary; it was a strictly modern contrast as far as the furniture went; both lots were of current design though from very different stables.

If any bias was shown it might be said that the commercial room started with the advantage since all the pieces were guaranteed by their suppliers to be established good selling lines; all in that room would therefore be familiar to most of the visitors and most people seem to prefer what they already know. The



These two chairs are not strictly comparable but their outlines point the difference between the conventional approach to upholstery design – opulent, flatulent, corpulent – and the



contemporary approach – light in line and weight. The appearance of comfort is greater in the former than in the latter; the reality is a matter of personal choice and experience.



ABOVE: Tiled fire surrounds are dominant features. There are still two very different schools of modern design in this industry, the one seeking to catch the eye, the other to rest it; the one playing up the contrasts and perches and points of interest, the other playing them down.

RIGHT: Another obvious contrast. Plinth versus legs. Which is better for room cleaning? Both modern, both useful, both in current production, the one shiny and showy with glamorous curves and contrasting veneers, the other modestly straightforward with contrasting woods in natural finishes.

exhibition, however, was presented with strict impartiality; no hints, advice, propaganda or explanatory captions were allowed – just the plain statement “These two identical rooms cost the same to furnish. Which do you prefer?” The voting slip drafted by the British Institute of Public Opinion asked only two further questions: whether the voter was under 35 or 35 and over; and whether he or she had spent £10 or more on furniture and furnishings during 1952. Men and women used different ballot boxes.

A welcome sign of the times was the identification of the National Association of Retail Furnishers with the exhibition; it was also proof of the distance travelled by the DIA since its pioneering days when a group of private enthusiasts set out to tackle public taste and design in industry. The DIA is still mainly an association of private individuals, each of whom dipped into his own pocket to meet the costs of the Charing Cross experiment.



RIGHT: With the recent arrival on the market of many new contemporary light fittings the contrast in styles becomes an easy game. This pair, serving identical purposes, was among the more obvious contrasts in the DIA Exhibition. Left, what might be called the pixy approach to lamp design; right, the functional, but tempered with consideration for shape and texture.



BELOW: Left: Dining end of the conventional room, showing shiny walnut draw-leaf table on curved slab legs, chairs with antique rub at corners upholstered in embossed leaf green plastic, hand-worked table cloth laid cornerwise, stained oak bureau also set cornerwise with vestigial Elizabethan water-on-the-knee in front legs, curtain with traditional floral pattern on dusty ground to hide dirt, leaf patterned carpet in rust and

green; light from the central ceiling pendant. BELOW: Right: The same part of the contemporary room with red pleated shade on rise and fall light immediately over table; folding table with Nigerian cherry top and beech underframe; set of mahogany chairs with woven chocolate and cream seats, Kelim rug in red, black and plum; floral curtains on white ground.



REGISTER YOUR CHOICE

These two identical rooms  
cost the same to furnish

WHICH DO YOU PREFER?

PLEASE VOTE

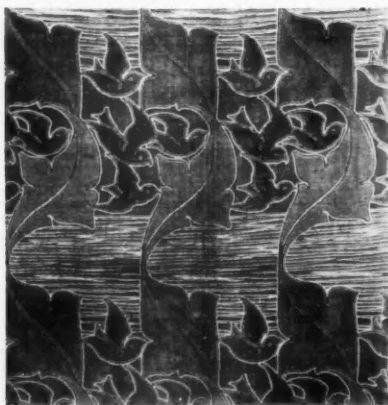
RIGHT: Consistency in design is the hardest thing to achieve. Even the DIA failed to keep to one style in its typography. Compare the notice board announcing the rooms with the clumsy voting slip.





ABOVE: 'Borogrove', Edinburgh Weavers screen print, 1949. Designer: Karin Williger.

RIGHT: Jacquard-woven silk and wool tapestry made by Alexander Morton and Co. c 1897. Designer: C. F. A. Voysey.

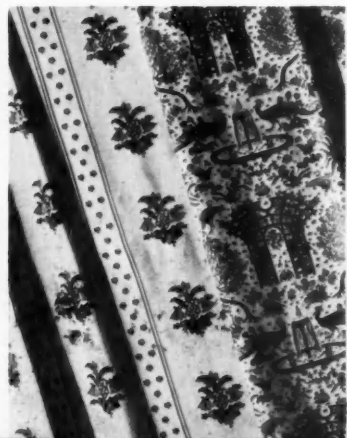
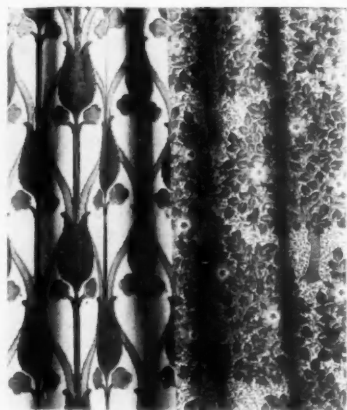


RIGHT: 'Queen Anne' SUNDOUR machine print, 1923, based on earlier hand-block. Designer: F. Vigers. Far right, 'Pleasance', SUNDOUR machine print first produced in this version in 1923. Designer: S. G. Mawson in 1907.

## DESIGN POLICY IN INDUSTRY

*At the International Design Congress it was stated that a successful design policy in the textile industry cannot be made: it can only grow from a strong tradition. Though many firms recognise the need for research and experiment in design, it is always necessary to keep up the flow of products designed for the general market. The following article shows how the high proportion of good contemporary fabrics in the range of Morton Sundour Fabrics Ltd is a direct result of this policy carefully planned over many years.*

BELOW: Left, 'Tulip', hand-block print produced c 1900 by Alexander Morton and Co. Designer: L. P. Butterfield. Right, 'Rosetree', SUNDOUR hand-block print, 1912. Designer: R. D. Simpson.





# MORTON SUNDOUR FABRICS LIMITED

## J. M. Benoy

A TRADITION OF DESIGN AND QUALITY is not easily acquired or maintained. But where it exists it is reflected in the pride and enthusiasm of all who may be concerned in designing, manufacturing and marketing the product, whether hand or machine made. It is a characteristic of Morton Sundour Fabrics Ltd where it owes much to a family interest in weaving that goes back nearly 100 years to Alexander Morton and his wife, handloom weavers of Darvel in Ayrshire, a district long renowned for high grade craftsmanship. It was Alexander Morton whose foresight and initiative, whose technical skill and artistic taste, laid the foundations from which the firm was to spring. His second son, the late Sir James Morton, after serving a thorough apprenticeship in the various types of weaving controlled by Alexander Morton, turned his attention to the production of new ranges of Jacquard fabrics and the application to them of the designs of the William Morris school for which he had a great admiration. Voysey, Butterfield and other distinguished architect-designers of the period, were enlisted in this missionary movement to substitute a contemporary idiom for the hitherto accepted reproductions of traditional styles. The fight for the acceptance of these tapestries by the trade was a hard one, but eminently successful, and these MORTON fabrics, as they came to be known, were soon selling throughout Europe and the USA. A few years later, the same designers were employed in the production of high quality madras curtains and hand-block prints. Some of the firm's products of this period have recently been on display at the Exhibition of Victorian and Edwardian Decorative Arts at the Victoria and Albert Museum.

To deal with the work a new factory was acquired at Carlisle in 1900. Already the tradition of design had taken shape; the tradition of quality was now to receive a tremendous fillip. James Morton, anxious that the lasting qualities of the fine colourings of his firm's fabrics should match the durability and the care that went into their design, undertook researches that resulted in 1904 in the production of the first yarn-dyed tapestry weaves ever to be issued with a

guarantee against fading. These were soon followed by guaranteed casement cloths and prints, and by 1906 the trade name SUNDOUR had become well known. In 1914 Morton Sundour Fabrics Ltd was formed as a separate company; A. Morton and Co, continuing the production of lace, and the new company developing the SUNDOUR fabrics.

## The Edinburgh weavers

The period between 1922 and 1930 was one of great activity, and increasing demand led to the opening of further factories in the United Kingdom and the formation of companies in the USA and Canada to market the firm's goods. It was at this time that James Morton took steps to ensure that aesthetic research, the need for which he had always stressed, should not lag behind the chemical research into dyeing that had played so important a part in the development of the firm. To this end he acquired the small hand-weaving factory of Saint Edmondsbury Weavers of Letchworth, founded by Edmund Hunter and his son Alec Hunter, which was noted for its ecclesiastical damasks and brocades. This factory was transferred to Edinburgh and the weaving was carried out by machine.

Edinburgh Weavers, as this branch was then called, was developed into a 'research laboratory' for the application of new ideas in design and construction to decorative fabrics. In collaboration with the most lively and creative artists of the day it was to evolve designs and qualities that, even if too advanced for distribution through the firm's normal trade channels, would nevertheless appeal to the relatively few. When Edmund Hunter retired and Alec Hunter left, Edinburgh Weavers was transferred to the parent company's headquarters at Carlisle and became the responsibility of Alastair Morton, the present design director of Morton Sundour Fabrics Ltd. With the help of its manager, Antony Hunt, and of such outside designers as Marion Dorn, Ashley Havinden, Hans Tisdall, Ben Nicholson, John Tandy, and the resources of the parent company, Edinburgh Weavers

had evolved by the outbreak of the war in 1939 an outstanding range of contemporary decorative fabrics. The parent company continued to produce fabrics of a high standard of design and originality, but at the same time it had to bear in mind the less adventurous taste of its wider market.

Today, apart from Carlisle, Morton Sundour Fabrics Ltd have weaving factories at Darvel and Glengarnock in Ayrshire, the former producing marquissettes, madras and muslin, and the latter tapestries and other yarn-dyed fabrics. At Killybegs, County Donegal, hand-tufted Donegal carpets are made; at Edinburgh, Scottish Folk Fabrics produce high-class needlework, curtains, quilts and bedspreads, and a subsidiary company at Lancaster, Standfast Dyers and Printers, undertakes all the dyeing and printing for Morton Sundour Fabrics Ltd, in addition to a large commission processing trade. Morton Sundour Co Inc of New York, formed initially to distribute Morton Sundour and Edinburgh Weavers fabrics, has now entered into production on its own account. Its 'Gallery Prints', contemporary designs with a New World flavour, show that the same tradition is being maintained throughout the organisation.

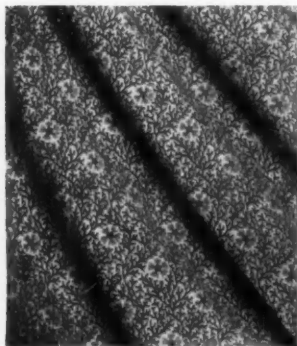
The chief outlets for the firm's goods, both at home and abroad, are the large retail stores, including both departmental stores and furnishing specialists, and interior decorators. All of these classes of customer

buy for the most part from stock lines designed and largely manufactured ahead of orders. Furniture manufacturers provide important subsidiary outlets, and among special users are aircraft and shipping companies, who often commission special designs.

## Design techniques

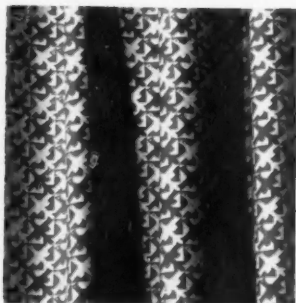
With such a background an efficient design organisation is to be expected. Before dealing with the methods used by Morton Sundour Fabrics Ltd to control design policy, it is necessary to mention certain factors, peculiar to the textile industry, that bear on this problem. From the point of view of design, textiles can be divided into three categories, each merging into the other. Firstly, there are the purely functional fabrics into which aesthetic considerations hardly enter, such as canvases, sheetings and the like. Secondly, there are the plain stripe and check, structurally patterned materials, plain and dobby woven, that contain colour and texture in addition to functional qualities. Lastly, there are the printed and figured woven fabrics with which this study is more concerned.

It is common to all craftsmanship, and to industrial design, that the designer should bear in mind the purpose for which the product is to be made and the materials and technical process to be used in making it. A fabric has not only to wear well but also to look

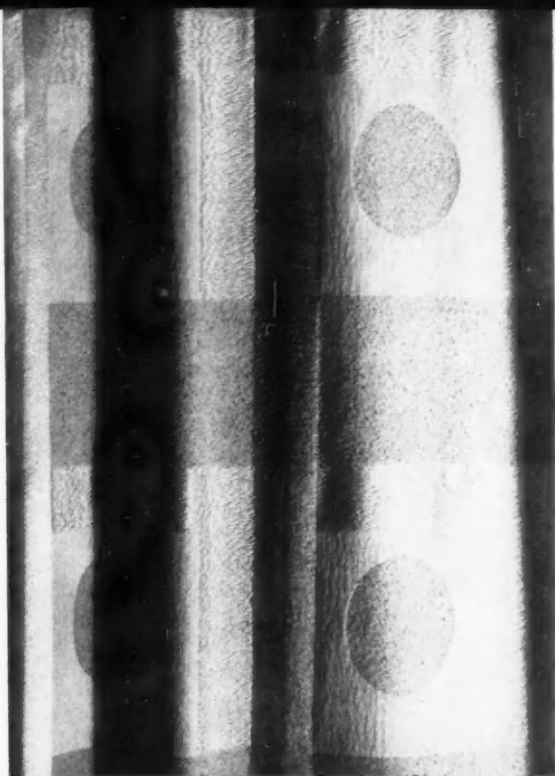


RIGHT: 'Sardinian', heavy SUNDOUR chenille tapestry produced in 1926. Construction and design adapted by F. Gibson, of the firm's studio, from Sardinian hand-woven peasant fabric.

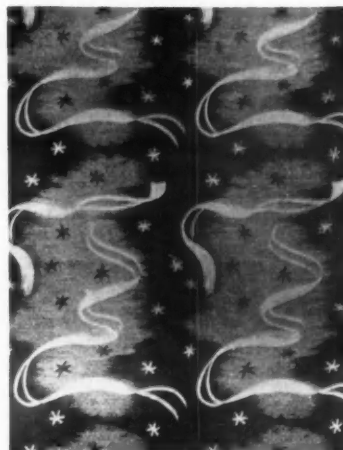
Two SUNDOUR 'Eitherway' prints. LEFT: Designer: R. D. Simpson (1923). BELOW: Designer: Charles Paine (1924).







*'Vertical', heavy curtain fabric, one of a group of abstract furnishing designs brought out by Edinburgh Weavers in 1936. Designer: Ben Nicholson.*



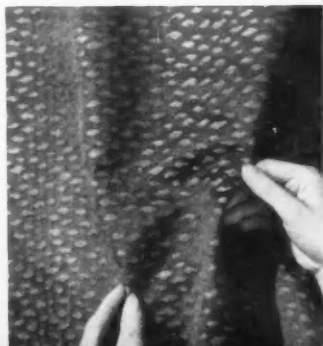
*ABOVE: 'Milky Way', Jacquard curtain fabric produced by Edinburgh Weavers in 1935. Designer: Ashley Havinden.*

## WOVEN FABRICS

*RIGHT: 'Hasta', Jacquard curtain fabric with tufting produced by Edinburgh Weavers in 1935. Designer: Marion Dorn.*



*'Dapple', contemporary damask produced by Edinburgh Weavers in 1935. Designed by the firm's Pattern Weaving Department.*



*'Attica', Jacquard curtain fabric produced by Edinburgh Weavers in 1950. Designer: Marian Mahler.*



well. Indeed, in the case of the decorative furnishing fabric, its appearance is not less important than its function. Because of this dual characteristic in a fabric it is common for the designing to be carried out by two people. One of them may design the cloth construction and the other produce the pattern to be woven into or printed on the fabric. In the first case yarns and weaving techniques are chosen to achieve a certain quality of cloth within the limit of the plant available. In the second case the artist preparing the sketch for printing or Jacquard weaving must know the qualities of the cloth and technical points affecting the design, before he can complete his task. With a printed fabric the character of line in his sketch will depend on the method of printing, whether copper roller, wood roller, block or screen, and, to a lesser extent, the fabric to be used. With a Jacquard fabric the artist must know the construction of the cloth (the thickness of warp and weft threads, the number of picks per inch) and the maximum number of colour effects and gradations of texture possible.

In Morton Sundour Fabrics Ltd the main studio undertakes design work for all factories and associated companies. In addition, factories carrying out special processes will have their own studios. The pattern weaving section and the main studio at Carlisle are controlled by the design director, who is a qualified designer, skilled hand-weaver and a director of the

parent company. The studio, under his head designer, prepares the designs on paper which are subsequently printed or woven, while the pattern weaving staff under a separate manager, evolves the new cloth constructions for woven designs. The programme for each is settled by the design director who allows time for experiment and the development of new ideas. New designs and cloth constructions are built up either as a result of discussions between the pattern weaving manager and head designer on the one hand and the marketing manager on the other, or through the collaboration of the studio or the marketing staff with outside freelance designers.

The translation of a paper sketch into a woven design may not be creative, but it calls for artistic appreciation as well as technical knowledge. In printed designs, whether roller or screen, the translation of a paper design to cloth is a more mechanical task. In all cases the design director and his staff are responsible for checking the design while in production to ensure that it conforms to their requirements.

## Policy control

At this point, and with an outline of the factors involved, it is interesting to see how responsibility for design policy is exercised in the Morton Sundour group of companies. The design director is an equal



*'Florian', Jacquard curtain fabric with tufting, produced specially for the Savoy Hotel by Edinburgh Weavers in 1949. Designer: Alastair Morton.*



*'Enara', Jacquard curtain fabric produced by Edinburgh Weavers in 1951. Designer: Karin Williger.*

## PRINTED FABRICS



*'Gramarye', Edinburgh Weavers  
screen print produced in 1950.  
Designer: Humphrey Spender.*



*'Britomart', Edinburgh Weavers  
screen print, 1951. Designer:  
Sylvia Priestley.*

*'Apsley House', SUNDOUR screen print,  
1951. Designer: Enid Marx.*

BELOW: *'Elysian', Edinburgh Weavers  
screen print produced in 1949. Designer:  
Lucienne Day.*



partner with the works manager, the marketing managers and the sales manager in the task of large scale production and distribution. The reasons for this are sound. Each partner has a specialist field to cover and particular problems to face; each contributes to the process that begins with the designing of an article and ends with its delivery to the customer; each approaches the matter initially from a different angle. The designer thinks in terms of the article itself, how it is constructed and what qualities will make it of most use and provide the greatest enjoyment; the works manager is primarily concerned with manufacturing technique, with a steady production programme and standardisation as an aid to efficiency; the marketing managers and sales manager concentrate on distribution, stock turnover and price categories, on the type of retail shop to be supplied, and the class of customer to be served. Although all are regarded as equal partners, the ultimate responsibility for deciding in detail which designs and qualities should be manufactured and sold rests with the marketing manager. None but he can take the risk of laying down stocks. If he has to bear that risk he must be free to decide. Each main trading section of the business, it should be noted, is under the control of a marketing manager.

Matters are brought to a head each time the new season's ranges are considered. First, there is a review of the current year's sales to see which designs have or have not sold well. This may only indicate what not to do in future. In any case, whether a design sells

well or not, something new must be added each season. Second, the designers and pattern weaving manager show their work for the new range. Their sketches and trials are prepared in advance so that at the start of a new season they can be discussed and selections made of those to be completed for final production. The marketing managers may then outline their ideas. It is a two-way traffic. The consultation and discussion which follow, may possibly be an indecisive method of carrying out a design policy, but if there is not sufficient confidence between the designing and selling staffs for them to be in general agreement, it would be impossible for them to work together at all. Designing, manufacturing and distribution on this scale is necessarily a co-operative task within the framework of the firm's design tradition.

The situation is reviewed two or three times a year at the 'Styling Conferences', at which the Chairman of the group presides. All those previously mentioned who are concerned with the production of new designs are present and the previous range is discussed and criticised. The opportunity may also be taken to use the conference as a sounding board for new ideas and in this way an unco-ordinated design policy, which might occur in a large firm with several independent branches, is avoided.

## New stimuli

Outside designers are frequently employed to impart fresh ideas. The firm's own designers are

*'Foreshore', Edinburgh Weavers screen print produced in 1952. Designer: Lucienne Day.*



*'Cynthia', SUNDOUR screen print, part of a range of contemporary floral chintzes brought out in 1951. Designer: Hans Tisdall.*

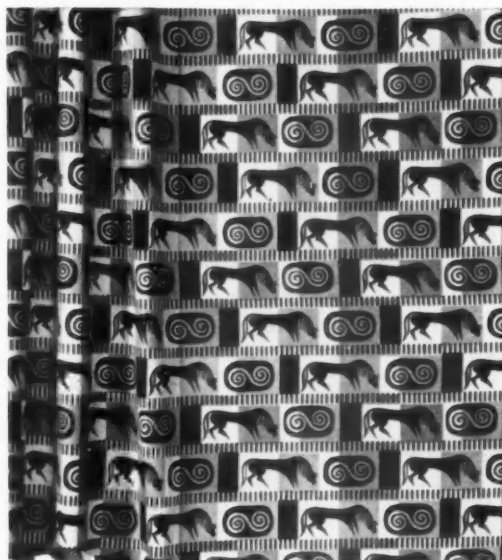


often warned about getting into a rut, and though they should be more conversant with the manufacturing processes than the outside designer they must keep abreast of new developments. This can be done by providing suitable surroundings in which to work, as at Carlisle, and facilities for travel, visits to exhibitions and fashion shows, and contact with other designers at home and abroad. All these are well tried and generally accepted. But the fact that Alastair Morton, who directs the design studio and pattern weaving section of the Morton Sundour group, has taken up hand-weaving within the last few years, is out of the ordinary. He finds that this provides the simplest and most spontaneous means of experimenting in weaving and of developing ideas for production.

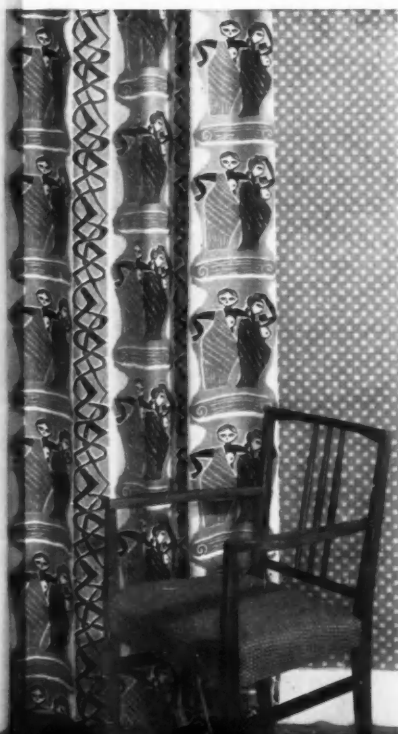
It is not surprising to find evidence of good design in other activities of the firm. Interesting factory and office buildings are matched by the striking new premises designed by Joseph Platt for the firm in New York. The best exhibition designers, including Misha Black, have been commissioned for their BIF stands. In their advertising, artists of the calibre of Charles Paine, John Farleigh, Sir Hugh Casson and Edward Bawden have been employed. It is almost superfluous to comment further. What has emerged from this study of policy and of organisation is a tribute to the enthusiasm and enterprise of three successive generations. Once again, good design has proved good business.



'Beatrice', SUNDOUR screen print produced in 1952. Designer: F. Gibson of the firm's studio.



'Altamira', screen print on heavy crêpe, first produced by Edinburgh Weavers in 1952. Designer: Christine Clegg.



'Capricorn', Edinburgh Weavers screen print produced in 1952. Designer: Hesling Grudzinska.



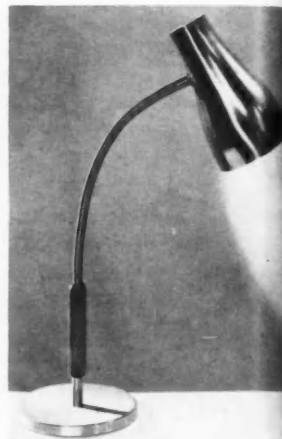
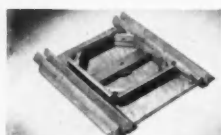
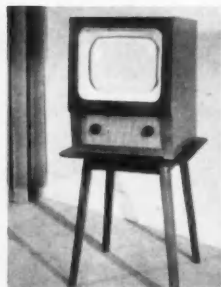
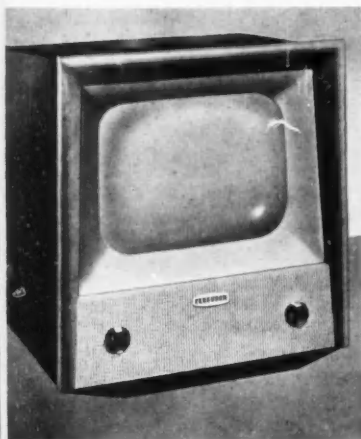
'Loches Cathédrale', screen print based on picture by Biala from the 'Gallery Print' range of Morton Sundour Co Inc of New York.

The recessed front is like a proscenium arch and the pale colour lessens brightness-contrast. Maker: Thorn Electrical Industries Ltd.

Television or coffee table with revolving top. Designer: Commander D. N. W. Joel. Maker: David Joel Ltd.

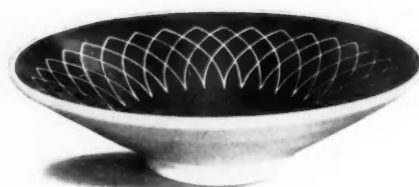
Chassis and cabinet combine to make a ROLLS-ROYCE job. Designers: G. J. Collins (cabinet), R. A. Dale (chassis). Maker: Dynatron Radio Ltd.

Switch inside top of reflector, flexible arm, waxed beech hand-grip, takes 100 W lamp. Designer: Rudolf Hollmann. Maker: Oswald Hollmann.



## REVIEW OF CURRENT DESIGN

This feature offers a selection of goods up to the standard acceptable for 'Design Review', the photographic index of current British products that is open for inspection at the London headquarters of the CoID. Manufacturers in a wide range of durable consumer goods are invited to submit their new products for inclusion in 'Design Review'. Enquiries should be addressed to Mark Hartland Thomas, Chief Industrial Officer, Council of Industrial Design.



Earthenware bowl, hand made, with incised decoration. Designer: William Barnes. Maker: Pilkington's Tiles Ltd.



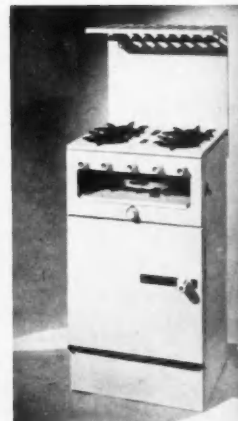
Sink with HOOVER washing machine occupies 42 inches square. Wringer folds into tub, covered by drainer. Maker: Ezee Kitchens Ltd.



Drinking water cooler and fountain. Maker: The Lightfoot Refrigeration Co Ltd.



Continuous-burning grate. The low height, 7 inches, chiefly accounts for its excellent appearance. Maker: Sidney Flavel & Co Ltd.



Enamelled steel panels totally enclose this VICTOR 71/16 gas cooker. The taps are of the push-in type for safe operation. Maker: General Gas Appliances.



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'Elesmere' screen-printed cotton.  
The chequered pattern makes a con-  
trolled design out of unusual subject-  
matter. Designer: Eryl Rice.  
Maker: Donald Bros Ltd.

'Quadrille' screen-printed design on  
taffeta. Seemingly casual shapes  
make a close-knit disciplined pat-  
tern. Designer: Lucienne Day.  
Maker: Sanderson Fabrics.

Earthenware: 'Westminster' shape, 'Clyde'  
pattern - brown, old gold and turquoise,  
with encrusted gold band and lines. De-  
signer: Enoch Shufflebotham. Maker:  
John Maddock & Sons Ltd.



LEFT: Electric boiler for eggs or  
liquids. Maker: L. G. Hawkins and  
Co Ltd.



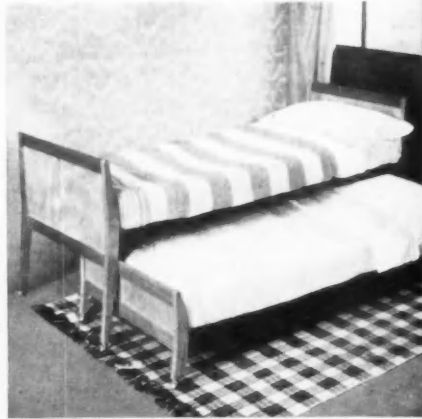
RIGHT: These two-piece and three-  
piece carver sets are in stainless steel  
with Whanghee cane handles. Maker:  
Mills, Moore and Co Ltd.



Trolley of natural mahogany with  
painted metal handle, designed especial-  
ly for hotel use, but graceful in any  
context. Designer: Dennis Lennon.  
Maker: Joseph Johnstone Ltd.



Trolley of hardwood and plywood.  
The top opens out as a table for  
cards or an informal meal. Maker:  
Henry Stone and Son (Furniture)  
Ltd.



One slides under the other, or the  
foot of the lower one goes under  
neath making an L-shape. De-  
signer: P. B. Varkala. Maker:  
Procanta Manufacturing Co Ltd.



Light fitting with adjustable polished aluminium reflector. Awarded third prize in a competition sponsored by the Museum of Modern Art and The Heifetz Co. Designer: James Harvey Crate.

## DESIGN FOR THE AMERICAN MARKET

Claud Bunyard

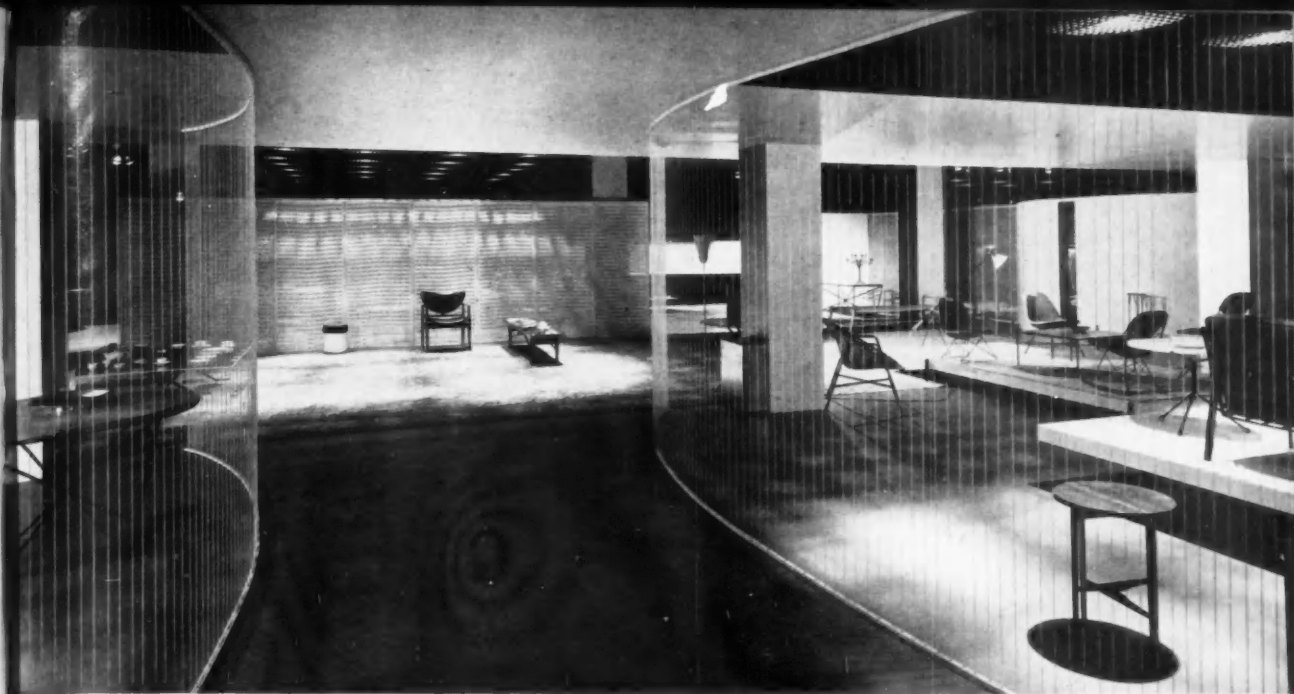
*The 'Good Design' exhibition at the Merchandise Mart, Chicago, with the smaller version at New York, is the largest permanent exhibition of contemporary home furnishings in the world (see DESIGN May 1950 pages 3 and 4). It is organised by the Museum of Modern Art, New York, renewed twice a year, and any item which can be bought in the U.S.A. is eligible for selection. Products from countries all over the world are displayed, yet in the 1952 winter show at Chicago, a glass decanter, some linen, several pieces of Lucy Rie's pottery and two RACE chairs were the only British examples. At the autumn show at New York in the same year, though goods from 11 foreign countries were on view, there was not a single British exhibit. This is reflected in the American stores where very few examples of good British contemporary design are on sale. Why does this distressing state of affairs exist? Some answers to this question are provided in the following article by Claud Bunyard, an Englishman now living in the United States.*

EVERY VISITOR ABROAD is acutely aware of the differences between what he sees and hears there, and what he is accustomed to at home. These differences tend to obscure the similarities, and an effort is needed to see things as they are and in true perspective. Yet this awareness of difference is immensely refreshing. It lifts the mind out of its ruts and intensifies observation. It is recreational in the literal sense.

One of the first things which will strike a design-minded British visitor to the United States, is the status of the designer, not only in industry but in the eyes of the public. Names like Nelson, Eames and McCobb in furniture, Russel Wright in pottery and glass, Gerald Thurston in lighting, and many others, must be familiar to a very large number of Americans. The designer's name in the United States has news value. The home furnishing magazines and the

columns of the daily papers devote space regularly to the work of individual designers. More and more manufacturers are publicising their designers in their advertising, sales literature and by marking their names on the merchandise, even when the designer is unknown to the public. There is always the chance that by so doing the designer will make *his* name and so theirs. It is now common for the retail customer to ask for the name of the designer.

By contrast it is hard to think of a single designer who enjoys a comparable public reputation in Britain. This does not mean that British designers are actually or potentially inferior. There is ample evidence that we have designers at least as good as their American colleagues. They are just not given adequate publicity, either by the Press or by the manufacturers who employ them. Nor, it is feared, are they given the

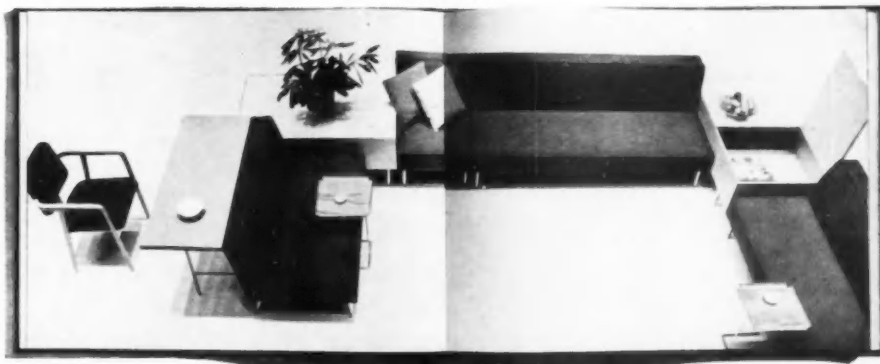


*Two views of the 1952 'Good Design' exhibition at the Merchandise Mart, Chicago. The curved screens are of plastic string.*



*This group is from a series of chests and cabinets designed on a modular basis for the Herman Miller Furniture Co. The base, which has an ebonised birch frame with woven cane top, and metal rod legs in satin chrome, can also be used as a seat. Designer: George Nelson.*

*Two pages from the Herman Miller catalogue. The sectional seating units are made of foam rubber and springs with legs of brushed chrome. Several extra components may be attached to the basic units including a back-table and corner unit (shown here), a drawer end-table, upholstered armrest, circular and rectangular side-tables. Designer: George Nelson*



*Nest of tables in walnut manufactured by M. Singer & Sons. This was shown in the January 1952 'Good Design' exhibition at the Merchandise Mart, Chicago. Designer: Bertha Shaefer.*



*Units from the PLANNER GROUP manufactured by the Winchendon Furniture Co. The perforated cabinet doors are finished in green, tan or black, the bench legs are black and the woodwork is natural. Designer: Paul McCobb.*



*Chairs from the PREDICTOR GROUP manufactured by the O'Hearn Furniture Co. The ungainly appearance of the nearest chair results from the straightness of the rear legs which continue without change of direction to form the chair back. This has been avoided in the other examples. Designer: Paul McCobb.*

same opportunities, encouragement or recognition by industry.

But lest it should appear that publicity for designers in the States is just a sales stunt creating bubble reputations, it should be emphasised that most of the best-selling work of the leading American designers is, by contemporary standards, of a high order. It is practical and sincere, and often shows great technical and aesthetic inventiveness; it plays up to and not down to public taste, and is American in the best sense.

But by no means all the better known or most successful designs on the market are identified with their designers' names. There is a trend for larger firms to set up their own design departments which usually function anonymously, though occasionally under the flag of the chief designer. These studios have equal status with the production and sales departments, and are responsible for all aspects of design policy as expressed in the firm's products, its packaging, advertising, sales literature, stationery – in fact the firm's total visual impact on its wholesale and retail customers. The design department of the Corning Glass Works is a classic example of this trend in action (see *DESIGN* March 1951 pages 17–21). Another is that of the Herman Miller Furniture Co. In this case the firm's design policy is under the direction of George Nelson, an architect, in whose office most of the firm's products are designed. Herman Miller also makes free use of outside talent and, to complement this, Nelson himself has recently extended his design activities to lighting and fireplace accessories. But there seems to be no golden rule for successful design policy either in the USA or elsewhere, except that there should *be* a policy, that its execution should be entrusted to someone who knows what to do and how to do it, and that that person should be given adequate authority and reward.

## European design sales

European, and European-sounding designers' names, especially Scandinavian, Dutch and Italian, are prominent on the American design scene, and seem to enjoy a special prestige. There are also some notable examples of European merchandise of anonymous design, in particular some Dutch pewter hollowware and Swedish stainless steel flatware, which are achieving phenomenal sales. These productions are typical of their countries of origin, and appear to have been designed without any thought of styling for the American market. But they possess qualities which characterise a great many American best-sellers –

*Units in natural maple from the PREDICTOR GROUP manufactured by the O'Hearn Furniture Co. This group was first produced in 1952. Designer: Paul McCobb.*



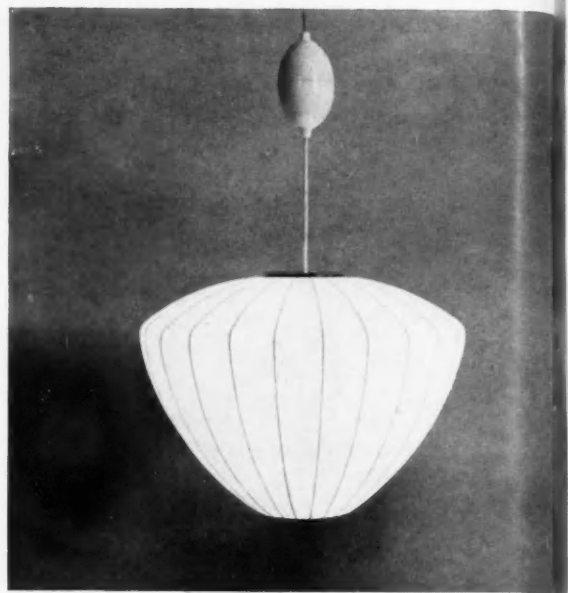
*Armchair and sofa from the PREDICTOR GROUP. The crisp angularity is characteristically American but seems too severe in furniture designed for relaxation. Designer: Paul McCobb.*



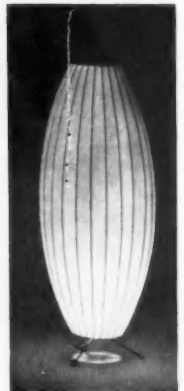




Group of ceiling light fittings produced by Ledlin Lighting Inc.



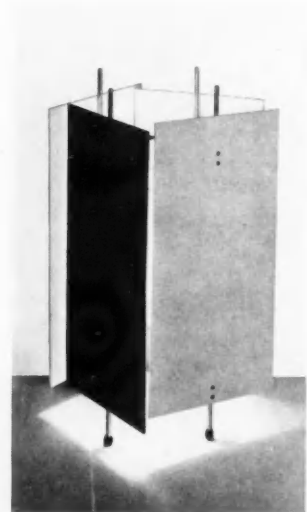
These lamp shades are from a new range in steel wire and white translucent VINYL plastic produced by the Howard Miller Clock Co. Designer: George Nelson.



This fitting produced by Light-olier can be used as a wall or table lamp. The shade is of aspen wood slats and the saucer shaped reflector is of semi-transparent PLEXIGLASS.



This lamp was included in the 1951 'Good Design' exhibition. The four MASONITE panels in grey and yellow are movable, giving different lighting effects. Designer: Robert Gage.





superb finish, practicality, simplicity and freedom of line, sincerity and self-confidence. In short they are 'naturals'.

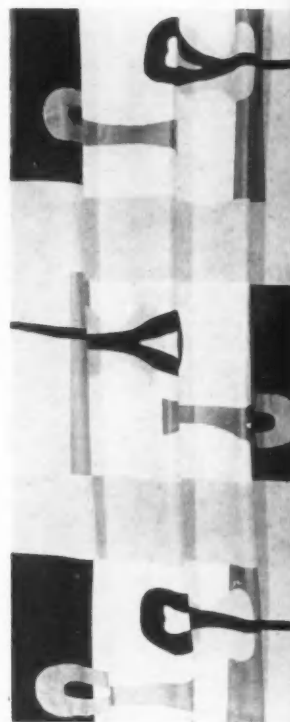
One hears a great deal in Britain about styling for the American market, but there is substantial evidence that the idea of an American style is, as far as the consumer's taste is concerned, greatly exaggerated and largely a myth. Admittedly, particular designs and styles have proved more successful on the market than others, and there are the normal fluctuations in public taste and demand, especially in colour. But, fundamentally, successful design in the USA, as elsewhere, is *good design*, meaning by this – production for the practical and spiritual needs of today by the best and most economical means available. George Nelson in an inspiring foreword to the Herman Miller catalogue effectively exposes the fallacy of chasing the phantom of consumer demand. Herman Miller's have never undertaken consumer research. They have made what they believed in and sold it with faith.

This does not mean that intending British exporters can avoid intelligent study of the American market and the American way of social life. The trend of American life today is away from the cult of 'gracious living' and towards greater freedom, ease and informality. There is nothing lazy or apologetic about this trend. It is a spontaneous wholehearted response to changing social and economic conditions, and the climate – or more accurately – climates of the States. Already it has profoundly affected domestic architecture and the design of almost everything used in the home. For instance, refrigeration, central-heating and television have radically altered methods of preparing and serving food and drink, the lay-out of rooms and the functional form of the furniture and accessories concerned. In such changes, as well as in new techniques of production, are to be found the roots of the contemporary American style, and it is of vital importance that British exporters, manufacturers and designers should familiarise themselves with the facts and the spirit behind these changes if they are to benefit from the opportunities which present themselves. American magazines tell much of the story, and there is an excellent book by Russel (the designer) and Mary Wright, called *GUIDE TO EASIER LIVING*, which is a mine of factual information and suggestive of future trends. But the only way to get to the heart of these changes is to cross the Atlantic and experience them.

Americans, like all other peoples, have aesthetic preferences which are purely national, but more important than their Americanism is the fact that they



ABOVE: Screen printed cotton produced by the Printer's Corporation of America. Designer: Vera. RIGHT: Natural linen fabric printed in gold, black and white, produced by Arundel Clarke. Shown at the 1952 'Good Design' exhibition. Designer: Eve Peri.



BELOW: Sterling silver flatware produced by Towle Silversmiths. One of the few serious attempts at contemporary design by an American silverware manufacturer. Designer: John Van Koert.



are human beings, and respond to the human qualities that are inherent in all really good design – warmth, generosity, sincerity, vigour, imagination, courage, self-confidence, intelligence, common sense, wit and a sense of humour. Above all they have no time for dullness, vagueness or timidity.

## Quality markets

There is, of course, an infinite shading and grading of American tastes, and the American market is essentially the same in its cultural structure as that of Britain or other civilised countries. The mass-market is not easy for imported goods from whatever source, because anything which can be sold in quantity can usually be produced cheaper in the USA. It is the quality and specialist markets which offer the best opportunities to British exporters. The 'traditional' market has long been a fertile field of operation for us, but it is being steadily encroached upon by the contemporary movement, and it is significant that in the last few years several top-ranking American manufacturers of reproduction European and Colonial furniture have introduced contemporary ranges into their collections. The market for contemporary design has not yet caught up with the general change towards informal living (even Americans are conservative, especially in certain areas) but the gap is steadily closing, and as it closes the market for 'traditional' is shrinking. This is much more than a swing of the fashion pendulum. The new style is based on the realities of social conditions and habits, and there seems to be not the remotest possibility that the trend will reverse. On the basis of this reasoning, the future is safe for good modern design, and no far-sighted British exporter will blind his eyes to this pressing fact, but will focus all his design intelligence on the needs and opportunities which abound.

## Social changes

The social and other developments, such as greater freedom and informality, which have produced such radical changes in functional design have had their parallel expression in the fine arts. These, in turn, have had their influence on the purely aesthetic aspects of design – linear form and decoration. But apart from a preference for strong colours (which is largely climatic in origin) and a taste for the dramatic, it is only in the *functional* aspects of design that any distinctive American style emerges. Aesthetically the style is international, and as buyers Americans welcome anything of real artistic virility and quality from

whatever source. The volume of demand for particular design ideas may vary, or be acceptable at first only to the intellectual minority, but the ultimate success of any really good design is practically assured. The 'intellectual' market is in any case a large one – larger in proportion than the British equivalent, because it is not artificially restricted by purchase-tax and other obstacles created by government. The younger generation of cultivated people who provide the main outlet and 'audience' for creative originality, is better off than its counterpart in Britain, and price and pocket in this section of the market meet more frequently on equal terms. Consequently, the spearhead of the contemporary movement in the USA meets with less resistance, and British manufacturers in this field who find themselves frustrated at home, may well find their efforts rewarded to an unexpected degree if, after due preparation, they introduce their best productions boldly to the American market.

## British opportunities

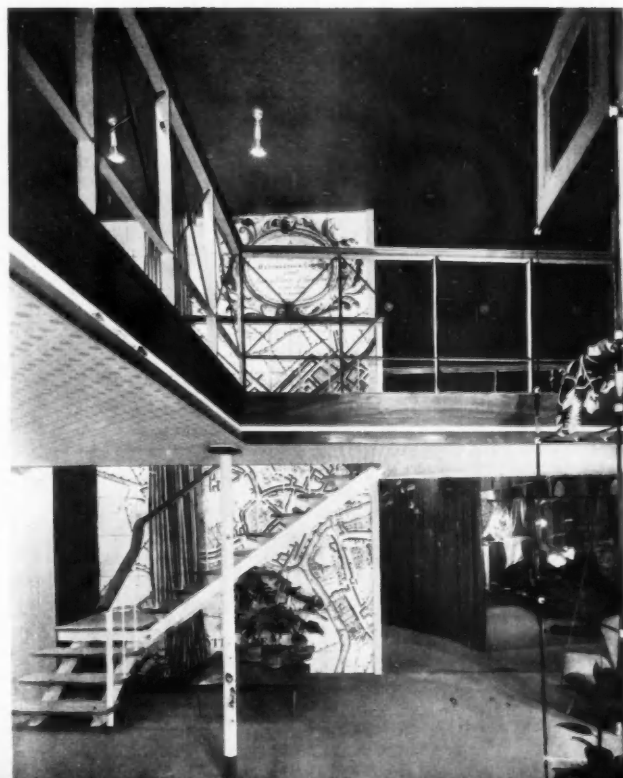
To risk a generalisation to which there are notable exceptions: American products are excellently finished but less well constructed than British. The difference in quality between surface finish and normally hidden construction is sometimes astonishing, and one has to go very high in the price brackets to find, for instance, drawers which are as well made and fitted as in a great deal of British furniture. But Americans do appreciate good construction which is hidden provided the outward appearance is attractive to them, and sales are often lost when a second inspection reveals inferior workmanship or materials. But quality for its own sake without attractive appearance is not enough.

Finally there is the highly important factor of price. Americans have more spending money than Britishers, but the competition for their dollars is intense. In Britain, cars, television, refrigerators, home laundries and similar conveniences are to most people luxuries, but in the States they are almost necessities, and as a consequence Americans have probably a smaller proportion of their incomes available to spend on furniture and furnishings than Britishers. Also their new informal way of life has produced new needs and a market for decorative and entertainment accessories, for which there is no parallel in Britain. This produces enormous opportunities for the gift trade. These and other factors combine to reduce the market importance of quality. But provided the price of the better made article is not excessive, it stands a good chance of winning the sales race.

# A New Showroom for Cotton

*The formation of the Cotton Board Colour Design and Style Centre in 1940 was a big step forward in the recognition of the need for higher standards of design in the British cotton industry. Since then the growth of the importance of cotton in many fields has been considerable. The Centre's new showroom at Manchester, and some cotton weaves designed by students of the Royal College of Art and shown there in a recent exhibition, are illustrated on the following pages.*

THE NEW SHOWROOM at the Cotton Board Colour Design and Style Centre has been designed by Robert and Roger Nicholson, to make the best possible use of the available space for a programme of continually changing exhibitions. A wide range of textile products has to be shown, in addition to textile designs, pictures and various works of art which are included to keep Manchester designers in touch with new trends in art and design. Often the floor space has to be cleared completely for fashion shows or meetings, and it was therefore necessary to ensure that

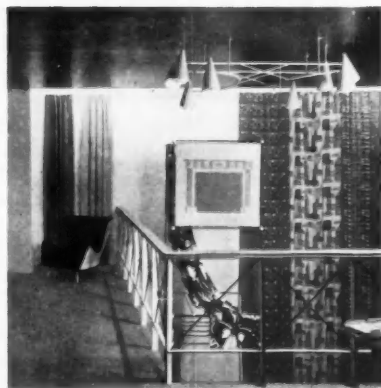


ABOVE: Part of the large hall showing a central frame display unit and hinged screen behind.

BELOW: The new entrance door in natural mahogany leading into the small hall.



LEFT and BELOW: Two views of the small hall showing staircase, mezzanine and central light fitting. Mahogany banister rail supported by yellow and white painted steel rods.



the exhibitions could be set up and dismantled quickly, and that the display fittings could be adapted to a variety of uses.

**STRUCTURAL ALTERATIONS.** The showroom consists of two halls, a large and a small one, leading into each other. The display area of the smaller hall has been increased by the installation of a mezzanine, and in this way reasonably large exhibitions may be held there while the large hall is being prepared for the next exhibition. A new show window onto the street and a new and more decorative entrance door have also been installed.

**DISPLAY FITTINGS.** The aim has been to develop fittings which allow all types of textile products to be simply and effectively displayed. The most widely used of these are the arc-shaped hanging rails which also serve to finish off neatly the top and bottom ends of fabric lengths. These rails may be fitted in various positions into brass sleeves set into perforated false hardboard walls. The frame display units can be built up in a variety of ways and serve many different purposes. Brass-edged mahogany panels may be used as shelves, and squares of matting as background surfaces, within the units. Hinged screens have also been devised which help to break up the circulation within the larger hall and serve as additional display areas. These are finished in a number of surfaces including white enamel, marble paper and various wood veneers.

**LIGHT FITTINGS.** The central light fitting was designed by Robert and Roger Nicholson and made by the general contractors, Russell Bros (Paddington) Ltd. It is built of a rod structure from which long drapes of fabric may be hung. The louvred lamps give a good concentration of light downwards for a focal point or may provide a series of spots on the mezzanine. Other lighting fittings were designed for the Centre by Troughton & Young (Lighting) Ltd.

**DECORATION.** It was decided that the decoration of the showroom would not be changed as often as previously and a scheme was therefore used which would be suitable for many occasions. Walls generally are white and slate grey except for some smaller wall areas which may be specially painted for particular exhibitions. On the wall behind the staircase effective use has been made of a blown-up eighteenth-century map of Manchester and Salford, and upstairs there is a paper specially designed by Robert Nicholson to suggest the texture of cloth. It was printed by Cole & Son (Wallpapers) Ltd. The ceiling paper downstairs is a Cole's design printed in green and white.

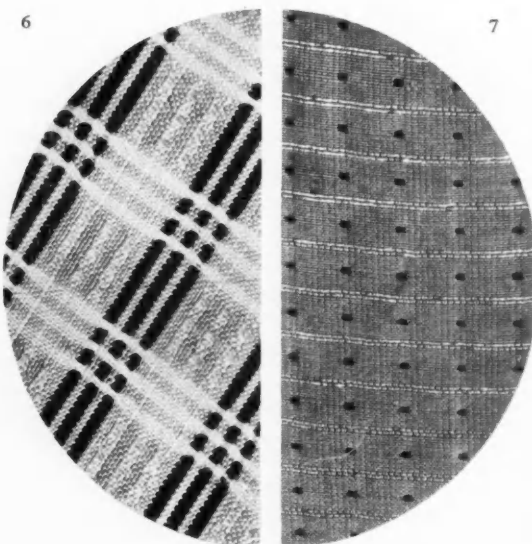


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## RCA Fabric Weaves

AN EXHIBITION OF COTTON WEAVES for furnishing and dress materials designed by students of the Royal College of Art has recently been held at the new showroom. Though this is the Centre's third exhibition of work produced at the College it is the first to be devoted to students of weaving who are under the direction of Margaret Leischner.

The distrust which the Manchester cotton industry feels for the work of student designers is traditional, and has grown from a belief that the art schools are only interested in handcraft printing and weaving. But this exhibition, which aroused considerable





LEFT: Three furnishing fabrics in white textured cotton weaves with over-printed designs. 1, abstract design in red. Designers: Kathleen Veevers (weave), W. Belcher (print). 2, abstract design in yellow and black. Designers: John Bridger (weave), Alan Price (print). 3, floral design in

blue. Designers: Margaret Woodmansey (weave), J. P. Albeck (print). RIGHT: Two Jacquard woven furnishing fabrics. 4, black and white design: 50 per cent cotton and 50 per cent viscose. Designer: H. F. Davy. 5, navy blue and white design: 100 per cent cotton. Designer: Edna Penniall.

interest in the trade, was a clear demonstration that the young designers of the College are alive both to the practical requirements of industry and to the need for originality and inventiveness in the design of cotton fabrics, in the face of competition from abroad and from rival textile materials. Some of the pieces are already in production and the general level was well above that of the average trade product.

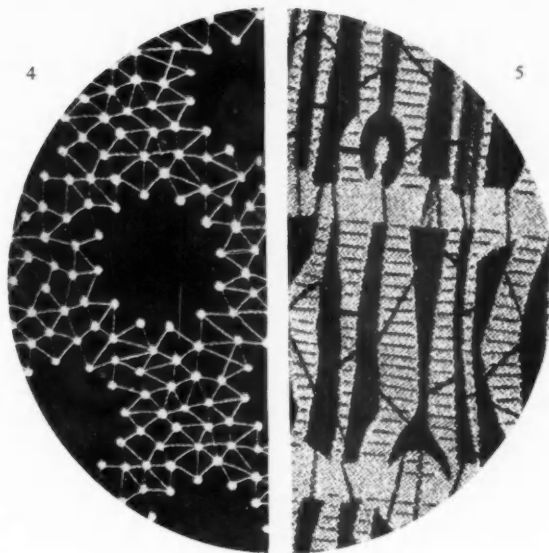
Of the furnishing fabrics it was encouraging to note the variety and inventiveness of the Jacquard weaves – an aspect of design which deserves more attention from the industry than it has received in the past. In many cases different types of cotton and other yarns – rayon and nylon, wool, viscose and occasionally cellophane – gave rich textural effects and added interest to the unusual colour schemes. But perhaps most interesting of all was a group of fabrics in which figured weaves were combined with over-printed designs.

These are only the first of a series of experiments now being carried out at the College, and it would therefore be premature to estimate how they are likely to influence the trade. They do, however, raise problems which may cause manufacturers to avoid making similar experiments of their own. Printing on textured cloth is by no means new, though weaves which contain definite motifs are seldom used. This is because the manufacturer can produce large quantities of an all-over textured cloth with the knowledge that a wide variety of designs may be successfully printed on it. But the more definite the figure becomes the more restricted will be the print designer in the variety of designs he can produce to suit it.

LEFT: Two Dobby woven dress fabrics. 6, pink, white and blue design: 100 per cent cotton, sold to Horrocks Fashions Ltd. Designer: Sheila Hankinson. 7, grey-yellow design with black

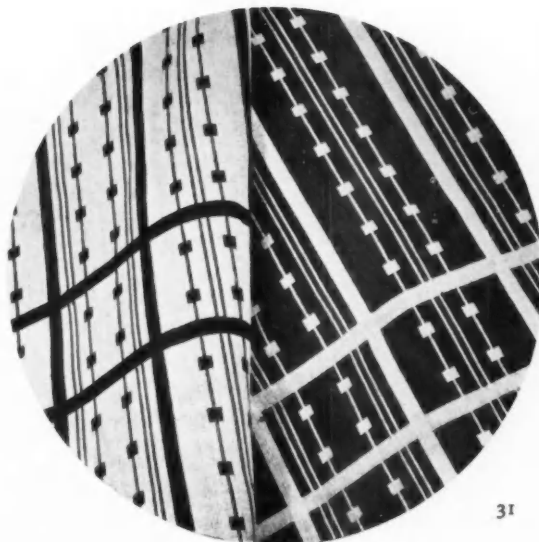
spots: cotton and tinsel yarn. Designer: Kathleen Veevers.

RIGHT: Dobby woven dark green and white double faced hanging, 100 per cent cotton. Designer: H. F. Davy.



The real danger arises when the cloth and print designers have no chance to collaborate on individual projects. If the grey-cloth is produced in Bradford the weave designer will have no conception of what is going to be printed on it when it arrives in Manchester. In the same way a pattern may be selected which was originally intended for printing on something entirely different. Such misuse of techniques could be avoided in two ways: either the cloth and the pattern which is to be printed on it are designed by the same person, or both the figured weaves and patterns, though produced in separate firms, are designed to allow for a wide variety of combinations. It will be interesting to see the result of these experiments after a further year's work by students at the College.

J. E. B.





# New Furniture at Earls Court

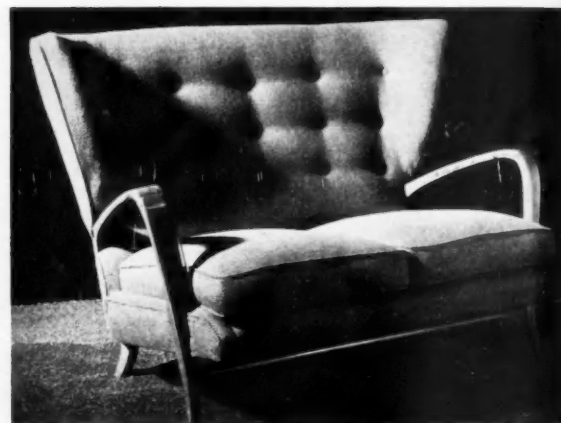
IN SPITE OF THE GENERAL impression of rich and bogus splendour on most stands at this year's Furniture Exhibition it is still possible to be enthusiastic about the few enterprising manufacturers who are 'having a go' at contemporary design. Many of them were in evidence last year, but this time it is clear that more careful thought and wider experience have enabled them to come nearer to a true understanding of the contemporary movement. Nevertheless, it is still difficult to find all the contemporary furniture at the show: much of it is half hidden behind the showy, brightly polished borax pieces which occupy the most important positions on the stands.

Although the extent of the contemporary movement is now wider than before, with more firms taking part, it is depressing to find that the manufacturers who have been known for their leadership in contemporary design, are now showing few new pieces. To keep ahead of their camp followers they cannot afford to relax.

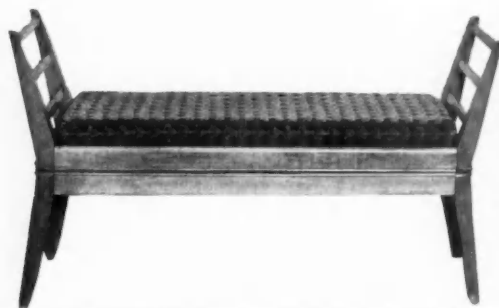
All prices quoted are approximate



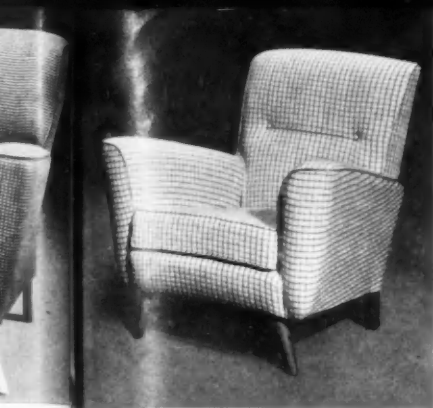
ABOVE: Sofa from the 'Audley' suite designed by L. R. E. Oxer and J. C. L. Oxer. Beech or birch frame, with spring or DUNLOPILLO upholstery. Produced by Luxury Upholstery Ltd, £20. BELOW: Sofa from the 'Python' suite with natural beech frame and pocket spring upholstery. Designed by A. J. Milne and produced by E. Horace Holme Ltd, £30.



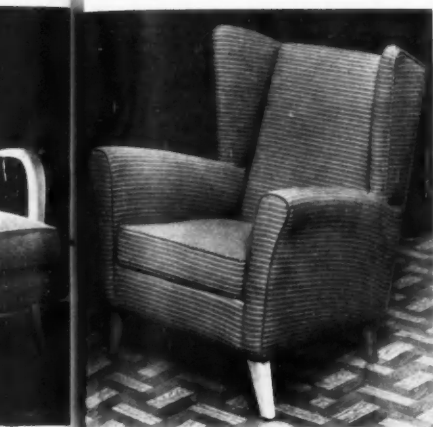
New additions to the range of HILLEPLAN unit furniture in solid agba with door and drawer fronts veneered in Dutch elm, Nigerian cherry or walnut. LEFT: Small chest of drawers, £14. RIGHT: The 'Vanity' dressing desk, £18. Designed by Robin Day and produced by Hille of London Ltd.



Adaptable party seat in natural beech. The top section may be removed and when turned upside-down becomes a low coffee table. Produced by J. Cinnamon Ltd, £14.



ABOVE: Armchair from the 'Kensington' three-piece suite produced by The Sydenham Cabinet Co Ltd. Complete suite £47. BELOW: Winged chair from a three-piece suite with rubberised hair upholstery and DUNLOPILLO cushions. Produced by I. Ziff and Son, £16.



Dining room furniture in mahogany, sycamore and rosewood produced by Bath Cabinet Makers Ltd. Sideboard with removable tray-shelf and sliding doors, £32. Table, £15. Dining chair, £5. Armchair, £9.

LATEX FOAM upholstered chair from a three-piece suite produced by Baker and Selman Ltd. Complete suite £24.

'De Luxe' chair with natural beech frame. Produced by J. Cinnamon Ltd, £15.



Sideboard with fall fronts and adjustable shelves from a new range of unit furniture in Japanese elm and rosewood. Designed by Professor R. D. Russell and produced by Gordon Russell Ltd, £30.



Drawer unit and long stool in sycamore and natural mahogany with brass tipped legs, brass handles and sliding cushion. Produced by Bath Cabinet Makers Ltd, £54.



Bookcase in Australian walnut with sliding glass doors, adjustable shelves and detachable legs. Designed by R. C. Heritage and produced by Spivack and Roberts Ltd, £17.

## NEWS

### New members for CoID

We are glad to welcome as new Council members four whose names will be well known to many of our readers: Mr Osbert Lancaster, whose cartoons in the DAILY EXPRESS since 1939 have amused millions, is a distinguished architectural critic whose books, by their original approach, have done much to stimulate popular interest in the subject; Mr A. E. Hewitt, who is Managing Director of W. T. Copeland and Sons Ltd, the famous pottery firm, and has shown courage in dealing with both very bad and very good conditions of trade in the industry, in which he is much respected; Mr J. Cleveland Belle, who was the first director of the Cotton Board Colour Design and Style Centre in Manchester, which he did much to establish successfully. He is now a director of Horrocks Crewdson & Co Ltd and of "Aquascutum" Ltd, and is still honorary consultant to the Cotton Board; Mrs Alison Settle, who has had wide experience in journalism and is now on the staff of THE OBSERVER. Her lively comments, often dealing with points of design in a thoroughly practical way, are eagerly read week by week.

Mrs Helen C. Bentwich, a member of the London County Council and past Chairman of its Education Committee, and Mr Robin Darwin, Principal of the Royal College of Art, have been reappointed for one and two years respectively.

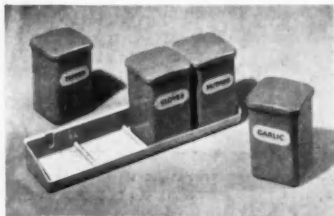
Three members of the Council have recently retired: Mr Cyril Dee, Commercial Manager of Hall Telephone Accessories Ltd and a trade-unionist; Sir Kenneth Lee, a director - and until recently Chairman - of Tootal, Broadhurst Lee Co Ltd; and Miss Audrey Withers, Editor of VOGUE and Chairman of the CoID Coronation Souvenirs Committee. All have served devotedly for five years and will be greatly missed.

### The Studio is 60

THE STUDIO will be celebrating its 60th birthday this month. It was founded in 1893 by Charles Holme whose grandson, Rathbone Holme, is now joint editor of ART AND INDUSTRY.

### Plastic containers

These kitchen containers are made of BEETLE plastic by Brookes and Adams Ltd, and are stocked by most large stores. They are available in nine colours with 14 transfers. A set of four containers and shelf costs 13s 6d and individual containers are 3s. Each set is packed in a cardboard box for window and counter display.



### Dow prize competition

A £75 prize was awarded to the winning team in the first Dow Prize Competition organised by the Illuminating Engineering Society. Twenty-six entries were received for this competition, which was intended to encourage collaboration between students of engineering and architecture in the design of lighting and decoration for the ground floor showroom of a provincial shop selling sports wear. The winning team consisted of four architectural students from the Regent Street Polytechnic, E. W. Uglov, S. M. Gray, C. G. Crowfoot and R. G. Smith, an electrical engineering student from the South-East London Technical College, T. A. D. Bindon, and an illuminating engineering student from the Croydon Polytechnic, W. D. Tyrrell.

### Gas at the Building Centre

A new section dealing with gas appliances, their installation and use, has been opened at The Building Centre, 26 Store Street, WC1. Under the title: 'Gas in the Design for Living', the display in this section has been designed by Montague V. Reed and erected by the Gas Council's exhibitions department.

Most of current gas and coke burning domestic appliances are on view together with large catering equipment and overhead heating devices. There is a special display for new appliances of particular interest in design and construction. Now shown in this display is the new CANNON A.125

domestic gas cooker (DESIGN February page 21).

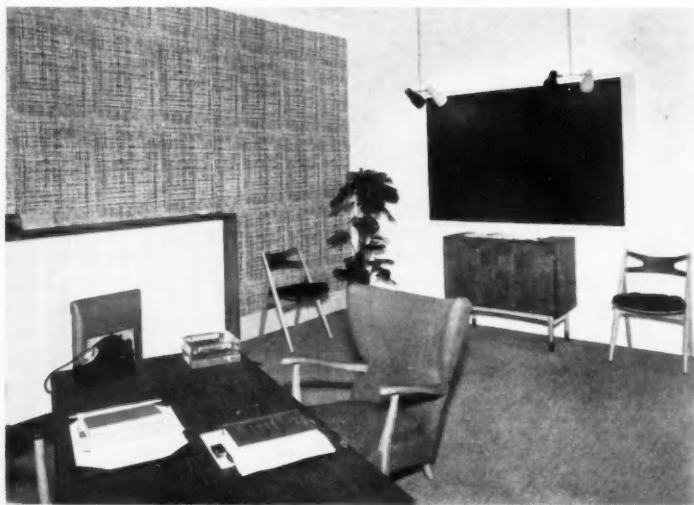
The Building Centre is open weekdays 9.30 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Saturdays 9.30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

### Glasgow lectures

In a recent lecture entitled 'An Industrialist's Views on Design Policy', W. J. Worboys, Chairman of the CoID, defined industrial design as the "blending of the beautiful or aesthetic with the practical or functional, when applied to the products of industry". This was one of a series of lectures organised by the CoID Scottish Committee and given before a public audience in Glasgow.

Mr Worboys, who described the 1951 International Design Congress as abundant evidence that good design pays, went on to say that industry would benefit by the acceptance of design as an essential component of industrial administration. He emphasised that design is not "something long-haired" but an industrial tool of great usefulness in industries where shape and appearance are important elements in the quality of the goods produced.

In the last lecture of the series Gordon Russell, Director of the CoID, spoke on 'Design Policy and the Public'. The responsibility for our design standards, he said, must be shared between the designers, the manufacturers, the retailers and the public. But the public must play its part by being more critical of design, by taking more interest in it and by learning more about it.



### New offices for THM

One of the offices of THM Partners, specialists in interior design, recently opened at 48 Dover Street, London W1. Designed by themselves, the premises consist of three offices and a combined secretary's and reception room. In the largest office, shown here, the desk and cabinet designed by Borge Mogensen, and the small chairs designed by Hans J. Wegner, are of teak and beech and are distributed in this country by Finmar Ltd. The easy chair from Primavera has a bright red cover and was designed by A. J. Milne. The teak mantel fitting surrounds a STATITE heat resisting panel and a black and white wallpaper designed by Robert Nicholson and produced by Cole and Son (Wallpapers) Ltd covers the fireplace wall. The light fittings are produced by Merchant Adventurers Ltd and the notice board is covered in a dark blue baize to match the colour of the opposite wall.



### New furniture manufacturer

The illustration shows some of the first furniture produced by a new firm, LM Furniture Ltd, Wallingford, Berks. The office or school-teacher's desk is available in various sizes. The frame is of beech with a mahogany veneered blockwood top and a suspended mahogany drawer unit. The chair has a beech frame which supports a bent plywood back and seat, also available with mahogany or black bean facings. It is the intention of the designers, John Morton and Tom Lupton, who were both trained as architects, to develop a small well-equipped factory capable of producing contemporary furniture of a high quality. Wherever possible new methods and materials will be used, and later it is hoped that outside designers will also be employed.

### Design in administration

A series of classes on the importance of design as a function of factory management is given by R. M. Kay, Appearance Design Engineer of Metropolitan-Vickers Electrical Co Ltd, to students of Industrial Administration at the Manchester College of Technology. A wide range of subjects is taught, including aesthetic and practical factors in design, the use of models, phases of development and design applications in the factory.

### Poole pottery in London

A group of experimental designs produced by Carter, Stabler & Adams Ltd was recently shown in an exhibition of Poole Fine Earthenware at the Tea Centre. These examples were all designed during the last year by A. B. Read and the Poole Design Unit. Other examples of Poole ware at the exhibition were designed by John Adams, Truda Carter and the late Harold Stabler.



### Pottery course at Burslem

Gordon Russell, Director of the CoID, presented the prizes recently at the annual prize-giving ceremony at Burslem College of Art.

To benefit from the close relationship that has been established between the College and the Stoke-on-Trent pottery industry a special course has been organised for pottery students from other centres. The complete course, which only students taking their National Diploma in Design may attend, comprises two periods of four weeks each. Part 1, for first year students, started in January, and Part 2, for second year students, will begin in November. Besides specialised training within the College, the course includes factory and museum visits. Throughout, emphasis will be laid on the importance of a cultural background for the development of taste and sensibility.

### The Modular Society

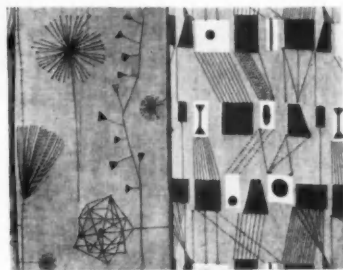
The inaugural meeting of the Modular Society was held at the Royal Society of Arts, John Adam Street, Adelphi, London WC2, recently. The proposal for the formation of the new Society was made by Mark Hartland Thomas, Chief Industrial Officer, CoID, in a previous lecture given to the Royal Society of Arts. The Society's object will be to contribute towards lowering the cost of building by co-ordinating the dimensions of materials, components and fittings on a modular basis.

A series of meetings for public discussion is being held at the Royal Society of Arts and the two remaining dates are April 9 and May 7 at 7.30 pm.

### Press water colours

The Printing, Packaging & Allied Trades Research Association, in co-operation with PUNCH, has developed three primary colours known respectively as Press Water Colour Yellow, Red and Blue. It is claimed that artwork prepared with these three colours only will give an exact colour match when reproduced by the three colour half-tone process. Shown to the Press recently were reproductions of full colour art plates (as published in PUNCH), some of the originals of which had been prepared with these three colours only. A comparison of originals so prepared with those produced by the more conventional method showed a truer colour rendition.

The colours can be obtained from Winsor and Newton Ltd.



### New fabrics at Heal's

Above are two examples from an exhibition of fabrics recently shown at Heal's, Tottenham Court Road. Left, 'Dandelion Clocks', printed rayon in black on yellow, turquoise, cerise or grey; right, 'Rig', printed cotton in turquoise, mushroom, grey and greenish yellow. Both were designed by Lucienne Day.

### Vehicle time chart

A small recording instrument for fixing to commercial vehicles which automatically produces a weekly chart to show the use of the vehicle has been produced by Rotherham & Son Ltd.

The instrument, called the Rotherham Recorder, is 8½ inches long yet it contains a six months supply of work charts. It can be wound, set and locked in two minutes. Inside is a stylus device which, operated by an eight day clock movement, marks a line on the chart which varies in thickness according to whether the machine is stationary or moving. At the end of a week the instrument is opened and the week's work chart torn off. Drivers can also get the correct time from the small 'window' in the front of the recorder (see illustration below).





## LETTERS

### Design appreciation in schools

SIR: I read Sydney Foott's article (DESIGN January pages 24-9) with interest and I am glad to know of the collaboration of departments of the LCC with the CoID.

Although I agree that a good influence will be exerted upon children by the well-designed things which are around them, and a bad influence by ugly and inappropriate design, I suggest that children are not as susceptible to these influences as is sometimes supposed. A child is naturally curious about things which move and work and after examining them he will often appreciate or criticise them.

A simple way of arousing his interest in design by associating it with movement is to allow him to make his own objects and to compare and contrast their use and appearance with those of similar objects of outstanding design. Practical work is to play an increasing part in our school curricula, and here there will be an opportunity to put ideas of this kind to the test. One consideration is that the teachers themselves shall understand and appreciate good design and that there shall be close collaboration between the art work and the craft or technical work.

C. BOOT  
Headmaster  
Christopher Wren School  
Kensington Church Street  
London W8

### Forging and the rural smith

SIR: In his review of THE BLACKSMITH'S CRAFT (DESIGN February page 35), Mr Butler suggests, although the third and fifth paragraphs of his review are in a sense contradictory, that to forge a job is a "long way round". This is by no means always so. Some of the repair work which a country smith is called upon to do for the farmer can be done more quickly, more cheaply and more satisfactorily by forging than by welding, flame cutting or grinding, provided the smith is skilled at the anvil; this depends on a sound assimilation of the basic techniques of smithing. For the indifferent smith, forging may be "the long way round". Hence the publication by the Rural Industries Bureau of this illustrated annual, which deals thoroughly as no other book does with the fundamentals of this particular skill (Mr Butler notwithstanding).

J. NOEL WHITE  
Information Officer  
Rural Industries Bureau  
35 Camp Road  
Wimbledon SW19

### Design on the railways

SIR: Whilst not wishing to detract from the no doubt careful work of his office, I find little cause for enthusiasm in Mr Colquhoun's article entitled 'Design for Railways'

(DESIGN November 1952 pages 15-19) and its sequel on the subject of railway moquettes (DESIGN February 1953 pages 22-8) and I would certainly disagree with some of the remarks in the introduction.

I think it should be remembered that railway design has an extremely long history and in the space of that time has been served by engineers, both civil and mechanical, whom it would be folly to deny were artists. They also built to last. The work of these gentlemen must be considered in relation to their times; an old locomotive, carriage or bridge is not necessarily of bad design because it has seen better days. That so much of their work has lasted so long could be a tribute to advanced design at the period of its introduction, and even more so when one considers other forms of contemporary industrial design.

Of course there have been bad designs - we are still executing and making them today - but far from being "a target for adverse criticism for many years", the railways have contributed to good design and all it stands for. They were amongst the first to show that the engineer could be an artist, that fitness for purpose could bring its own reward, and that men could take pride in designing and operating machines. And their industrial design had to meet a multitude of requirements.

One of the things which troubles me in these articles by Mr Colquhoun is the lack of evidence of participation in any overall consistent design policy, unless giving advice on veneers, staff badges and moquettes is considered to be part of a policy. But judging by the photographs accompanying the text (the new moquettes alone are nowhere near the London Transport standard) and the new standard carriages I have inspected, the final results are not very inspiring. I hope the Architect's Office is not falling into the trap of trying to become a kind of industrial stylist.

If we are to improve design on the railways, let it be part of a consistent design policy utilising the best from previous experience, but not afraid to use new materials and methods. Our continental friends are not so timid, for although I realise the position regarding materials has been difficult, that surely in itself is a challenge.

ALAN WHITEHEAD  
16 Ditton Lawn  
Portsmouth Road  
Thames Ditton  
Surrey

### Designers in this issue

Art Editor: Peter Hatch, MSIA. Cover: F. H. K. Henrion, FSIA. Page 6: Marian Mahler, MSIA (also page 15); Ernest Race, FSIA; David W. Pye, AA Hons Dip, ARIBA, MSIA. Page 7: Professor R. D. Russell, RDI, FSIA (also page 33); W. H. Russell, FSIA; Henry End; Eric Bedford, ARIBA. Page 8: Phoebe de Syllas. Page 12: Karin Williger, MSIA (also page 16); R. D. Simpson (also page 14); C. F. A. Voysey; F. Vigers; S. G. Mawson. Page 13: Marion Dorn (also page 15); Ashley Havinden, OBE, RDI, FSIA (also page 15); Hans Tisdall (also page 18); Ben Nicholson (also page 15); John Tandy. Page 14: F. Gibson (also page 19). Page 16: Alastair Morton (also page 19). Page 17:

Sylvia Priestley, MSIA; Enid Marx, RDI, FSIA; Lucienne Day, ARCA, FSIA (also pages 18, 21 and 35); Humphrey Spender, AA, Dipl. ARIBA, MSIA. Page 19: Christine Clegg, ARCA; Hesling Grudzinska; Joseph Platt; Misha Black, OBE, FSIA, M.Inst.RA; Charles Paine; John Farleigh; Sir Hugh Casson, RDI, MA, FRIBA, FSIA; Edward Bawden, CBE, ARA, RDI, ARCA. Page 20: Commander D. N. W. Joel; G. J. Collins; R. A. Dale; Rudolf Hollmann; William Barnes. Page 21: Eryl Rice, ARCA, MSIA; Enoch Shuflebotham; Dennis Lennon, ARIBA; P. B. Varkala. Page 22: James Harvey Crate; George Nelson (also pages 23, 25, 26 and 27); Charles Eames; Paul McCobb (also pages 24 and 25); Russel Wright (also page 27); Gerald Thurston. Page 24: Bertha Shafer. Page 26: Robert Gage. Page 27: Vera; Eve Peri; John Van Koert. Page 29: Robert Nicholson, MSIA (also page 34); Roger Nicholson, ARCA, MSIA. Page 30: Margaret Leischner, FSIA. Page 31: Kathleen Veevers; W. Belcher; John Bridger; Alan Price; Margaret Woodmansey; J. P. Albeck; H. F. Davy; Edna Penniall; Sheila Hankinson. Page 32: Robin Day, ARCA, FSIA; A. J. Milne, MSIA (also page 34); L. R. E. Oxe; J. C. L. Oxe. Page 33: R. C. Heritage, des RCA, MSIA. Page 34: E. W. Uglov; S. M. Gray; C. G. Crowfoot, R. G. Smith; T. A. D. Bindon; W. D. Tyrrell; Montague V. Reed, MSIA; Borge Mogensen; Hans J. Wegner. Page 35: R. M. Kay, BSC.Tech; John Morton, ARIBA, AA, Dipl.; T. M. Lupton, MA, AA, Dipl.; A. B. Read, ARCA, RDI; John Adams, ARCA; Truda Carter, ARCA; Harold Stabler. Page 36: Ian Colquhoun, AA, Dipl., ARIBA.

### Acknowledgments

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### Previous issues

DESIGN February page 25: The caption to the lower photograph should have stated that Dr J. L. Martin was the principal assistant to Mr W. H. Hamlyn, who was the architect to the LM & S Railway Co before nationalisation.

DESIGN February page 32: The display frames were designed by Terence Conran and made by Conran Furniture, and not by David Whitehead Ltd.

DESIGN February page 34: The title of the new trade journal published by the International Wool Secretariat is WOOL WINDOW, and not SHOP WINDOW.

DESIGN February page 34: We have been asked to state that the project for the ICI Alkali Division showhouse was directed by Mr Ralph Tugman who also wrote the booklet. He was assisted by his colleagues in the ICI Alkali Division.

DESIGN March page 7: The captions to the two photographs in the Harris and Sheldon Ltd advertisement should be transposed.

DESIGN March page 25: The caption to illustration number 3 should have stated that the chairs were made by Heal's and the table by Ernest Joyce.

DESIGN March page 34: The name of the designer mentioned in caption number 10 is Neville Conder and not Neville Ward.

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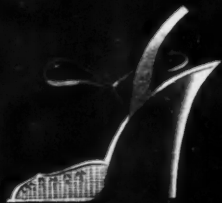
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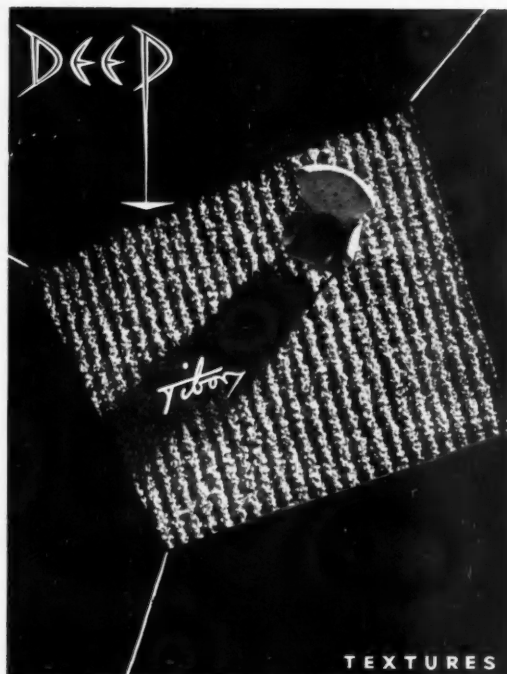
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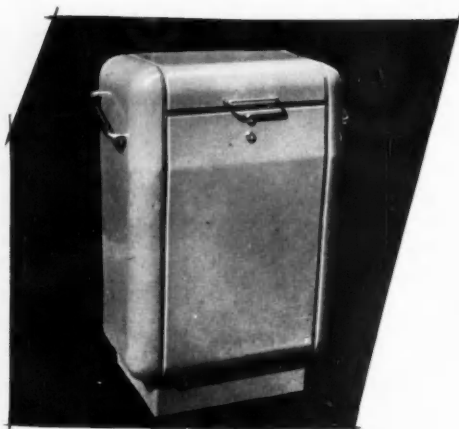
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# Colour Prints of London Transport Posters



*'The Tate Gallery', a poster designed for London Transport in 1928 by Rex Whistler*



*'Fairs', a poster designed in 1951 by William Roberts*

THESE are two of the series of 41 full colour prints of London Transport posters, which includes the work of Edward Bawden, A.R.A., Ivon Hitchens, Clifford and Rosemary Ellis and John Minton, among many others. The average size of the prints is 6" x 5". They can be obtained, price 1s. each (postage 3d.), from the Publicity Officer, London Transport, 55 Broadway, Westminster, S.W.1.



